

# The Bishops' Blue Coat Church of England High School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	111455
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cheshire West and Chester
<b>Inspection number</b>	356918
<b>Inspection dates</b>	19–20 May 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Stephen Wall

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1053
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	159
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Bishop Keith Sinclair
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Justin Blakebrough
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 April 2008
<b>School address</b>	Vaughans Lane Great Boughton, Chester Cheshire CH3 5XF
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 35 lessons taught by 35 teachers. It was not possible to observe sixth-form lessons because sixth-form students were on study leave. The inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of students. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at monitoring of students' progress, the school's self-evaluation and planning for improvement, and documentation relating to safeguarding. Questionnaires from 132 parents and carers were scrutinised, together with those returned by staff and students.

- How well students in Key Stage 4 achieve, especially in English.
- How effectively teaching impacts on students' learning and progress, especially in Key Stage 4.
- How accurately leaders and managers at all levels evaluate the school's effectiveness and use the outcomes to drive improvement.

## Information about the school

This an average size school in which the proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. Most students are White British. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. However, the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is slightly below average. The school has been a specialist science college since 2004. In April 2011 it became an Academy. The school has Healthy School and Investors in People status.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

This is a good school. Several aspects of its work are outstanding. They are: how safe students feel; students' contribution to the school and wider community; the use of assessment to support learning; the curriculum; the quality of care, guidance and support; and the effectiveness of partnerships in promoting students' learning and well-being. All these aspects have improved significantly since the last inspection, as has attendance. They demonstrate the school's good capacity for further improvement.

All students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress. Attainment by the end of Key Stage 4 is above average and rising. Attainment in English has risen significantly because staffing difficulties have been resolved and teaching is now very effective. Students make good progress because teaching is good. The school is rightly keen to increase the proportion of teaching that is outstanding to help students make even better progress. To achieve this, leaders and managers accept the need to create more opportunities to share existing examples of outstanding practice across the school and to develop further students' skills as independent learners. Occasionally, teaching does not present enough challenge to different groups of students; this can act as a brake on driving progress forward even more rapidly. Excellent assessment procedures ensure that students know exactly what is expected of them and how well they are doing. The outstanding curriculum has been developed in partnership with other providers to offer an extensive range of courses and qualifications for all groups of students, especially in Key Stage 4. The curriculum is playing a key role in driving up standards and developing students' aspirations and positive attitudes to learning.

Students enjoy school. Their attendance levels are high. Students are polite, mature and articulate. They behave well in lessons and around school. They feel exceptionally safe in school because of the outstanding care, guidance and support they receive. The school prepares students well for future success by making sure they achieve well and providing effectively for their personal development.

Leaders and managers at all levels, including the governing body, provide the school with a sharp focus on improvement. Evaluation of the school's effectiveness is accurate. The outcomes are used astutely to tackle any shortcomings and lay foundations for further success. The school's specialism in science is led and managed very effectively to support students' learning and raise attainment.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of teaching that is outstanding so that students make even better progress by:
  - sharing existing outstanding practice systematically across the school

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- making sure that the level of challenge in lessons is consistently high, for all groups of students
- developing further students' skills as independent learners.

## **Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

**2**

In lessons, students are eager to contribute their thoughts and ideas. They work together effectively in pairs and small groups where they listen respectfully to each other's contributions and offer constructive criticism. Relationships between adults and students are strong. Consequently, behaviour is good. Above all, students show positive attitudes to learning, even when the level of challenge is occasionally too high or not quite high enough. Students enter Year 7 with generally average levels of attainment. They make good progress at all stages as they move up through the school. By the end of Key Stage 4 attainment is above average. Boys' attainment was lower than girls' in 2010 but inspection evidence shows that the gap has been closed and parity restored. Inspection evidence and school data show clearly that the upward trend in attainment is set to continue. This applies also to students with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Students are proud of their school. They say how exceptionally safe they feel. They know the importance of leading healthy lifestyles. Numbers participating in the extensive range of sporting enrichment activities are high. Students enjoy taking on a very wide range of responsibilities in school. For example, older students act as mentors to younger students, and students join senior staff on learning walks around the school to evaluate the quality of learning and behaviour in different classes. Students are very active in the local community. For example, they work closely with students from a neighbouring special school and with groups of local senior citizens. Consequently, the school is highly regarded by the local community. Students' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is seen, for example, in their good behaviour, their good levels of awareness of environmental issues and in their mature awareness of global issues.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	1
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

## How effective is the provision?

Teaching is consistently good. Lessons are well-planned to provide students with a good variety of activities to engage their interest and motivate them in their learning. Teaching invariably has a sharp focus on learning and progress. In the very best, outstanding lessons, the level of challenge is very high and students make outstanding progress. In a Year 9 drama lesson, for example, students worked independently to produce excellent mini-dramas in small groups on the theme of 'lives gone wrong'. Skilful questioning by the teacher ensured that students fully explained their work. Constructive criticism was provided by students at all stages. Students' engagement and progress was a joy to behold. Occasionally, however, lessons are too teacher led and limit the development of students' skills as independent learners. Excellent assessment procedures ensure that staff know precisely the progress students are making towards demanding targets. Most teaching is making very effective use of assessment data to match tasks closely to students' needs and to accelerate progress further. Marking of students' written work is of consistently high quality in showing students what they need to do to improve their work.

The outstanding curriculum provides students with an excellent range of courses and qualifications appropriate to their needs and abilities. An extensive range of extra-curricular sporting and artistic activities attract the participation of very large numbers of students. The deep impact of the curriculum is seen in rising attainment, much improved

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attendance levels and students' high levels of enjoyment. The school uses its specialism in science very effectively to provide extra support in other core subjects.

The quality of care, guidance and support provided by the school is exceptional. Transition arrangements for students joining Year 7 are highly effective in enabling them to settle seamlessly into their new school. The support provided for vulnerable students and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities is of the highest order. It ensures that they feel valued as individuals and are happy to be in school. Teaching assistants and the school chaplain play highly-effective roles in supporting students and helping them make good and improving progress. Excellent guidance ensures that the proportion of students leaving the main school and the sixth form not in employment, training or continuing education is exceptionally low.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The key to the school's growing success lies in good leadership and management at all levels. Leaders and managers are responding positively to the headteacher's setting of high expectations for improvement. The governing body is very supportive and knowledgeable about the school's effectiveness. It asks the necessary questions to hold the school to account for tackling any shortcomings. Leaders and managers have forged outstanding partnerships. These benefit the students significantly and support the raising of students' achievement. For example, partnerships with other providers have improved significantly the curriculum for students in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form, and close links with Chester University provide staff with access to opportunities for advanced study to drive up the quality of teaching.

The school promotes equal opportunities well. The school is ambitious for all groups of students to achieve to their potential. Its success is seen in the rising levels of attainment and rapidly improving progress of all students. The gap between boys' and girls' achievement in the main school has narrowed significantly and now broadly reflects the national picture.

Leaders and managers, including the governing body, take their safeguarding responsibilities very seriously. Appropriate checks on adults working with children are carried out. Staff training is regular and of high quality. Attention to risk assessment is comprehensive. Appropriate policies and procedures are in place. They are reviewed and amended regularly.

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In planning for its promotion of community cohesion, the school shows very good understanding of its context. It plans and carries out a wide range of activities to promote community cohesion effectively. The school itself is a harmonious community and links with the local community are strong and improving. In discussions, students show good understanding of world issues. The school's links with Romanian orphanages involves students not only in regular visits but fund-raising by the whole school to finance the visits.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Sixth form

The sixth form is good. Students regularly meet or exceed the demanding targets set by the school. Attainment is above average and rising. This represents good progress for students who, overall, join the sixth form with average levels of attainment. Students say how much they enjoy life in the sixth form. They value the good guidance and support they receive for their academic progress and for their personal development. The sixth form prepares students well for the future. No student leaves the sixth form without entering employment, training or higher education. The numbers of students going on to university degree courses, including courses at prestigious universities, is high and increasing year-on-year.

Although it was not possible to observe teaching and learning at first hand during the inspection, students testify to the fact that nearly all teaching is good. They feel the level of challenge is appropriate. Students say that opportunities to explore and extend their learning independently are a strong feature of learning in the sixth form. The curriculum is good. Through its strong partnerships with other providers, the school has extended the range of sixth-form courses significantly. There is a wide range of enrichment activities in



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sports, the arts and in charity work that impact positively on students' personal development and well-being.

Sixth-form leaders and managers are constantly on the lookout for ways to improve outcomes. For example, they are introducing the outstanding procedures for assessment in the main school to add to the evaluation of the overall effectiveness of the sixth form and identify any shortcomings. Safeguarding procedures are managed effectively to ensure that students feel safe. Sixth-form leaders monitor the quality of teaching and learning regularly and accurately. Parents and carers receive regular, detailed reports about students' progress towards demanding targets.

*These are the grades for the sixth form*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

## Views of parents and carers

A below average rate of return of questionnaires from parents and carers was received. Most expressed good levels of support for the school's work. However, a small minority of parents and carers did not agree that the school helps their child lead a healthy lifestyle. Inspectors spoke at length to senior managers and students about this. They also gathered a range of other evidence such as: the results of previous questionnaires sent out by the school; curriculum provision; the range of extra-curricular sporting activities and the numbers of students participating; and the quality and range of midday meals provided. Evidence gathered indicated strongly that the school's promotion of healthy lifestyles is good.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Bishops' Blue Coat Church of England High School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 132 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1053 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	51	39	73	55	7	5	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	50	38	79	60	1	1	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	71	54	54	41	3	2	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	58	44	58	44	10	8	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	49	37	72	55	8	6	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	35	27	78	59	11	8	3	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	28	21	69	52	26	20	1	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	40	30	70	53	10	8	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	53	40	61	46	13	10	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	40	30	67	51	14	11	7	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	32	24	74	56	12	9	3	2
The school is led and managed effectively	41	31	73	55	9	7	5	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	61	46	59	45	7	5	3	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



23 May 2011

Dear Students

**Inspection of The Bishops' Blue Coat Church of England High School, Chester, CH3 5XF**

Thank you for your warm welcome during the recent inspection of your school.

You go to a good school with a good sixth form. Both are improving rapidly. Several aspects of your school are outstanding. They are: how safe you feel; your contribution to the school and wider community; the use of assessment to support your learning; the curriculum; the quality of care, guidance and support it provides for you; and the effectiveness of partnerships in promoting your learning and well-being.

You make good progress as you move up through the school to attain above-average standards at the end of Key Stage 4 and the sixth form. Your good achievement is the result of good teaching and your positive attitudes to learning. In order to help you achieve even better standards, I am asking the school to increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:

- sharing existing outstanding practice systematically across the school
- making sure that the level of challenge in lessons is consistently high, for all abilities
- developing further your skills as independent learners.

I am confident that you will continue to work hard with your teachers to make sure that your school goes from strength-to-strength in the coming years.

I wish you the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Wall

Lead inspector

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